

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00280 061016Z

46

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 IO-14 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-20

SCCT-02 EB-11 COME-00 NIC-01 ACDA-19 DRC-01 /187 W

----- 045407

R 011002Z MAY 74

FM USINT BAGHDAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 951

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 0280

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IZ

SUBJECT: BAATH STRATEGY AGAINST BARZANI

REF: BAGHDAD 274

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH CONFLICT WITH KURDS HEATING UP,
REGIME IS STICKING TO ITS STRATEGY OF ISOLATING MULLA
MUSTAFA BARZANI THROUGH COMBINATION OF MILITARY PRESSURE,
PROMISES OF ECONOMIC BENEFITS FOR KURDISH PEOPLE, AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF NOMINAL AUTONOMY WITH ANTI-BARZANI KURDS.
STRATEGY HAS NOT SUCCEEDED THUS FAR IN ATTRACTING KURDS

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PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00280 061016Z

AWAY FROM BARZANI AND MILITARY ACTION IS BECOMING ITS

MAJOR ELEMENT IN FACE OF UNCOMPROMISING KURDISH RESISTANCE. IF, HOWEVER, REGIME CAN CONTINUE POLICY FOR SIX MONTHS OR LONGER, WHICH WOULD REQUIRE STRONG DISCIPLINE OVER ARMY AND CONTINUED RESTRAINT IN FACE OF KURDISH RADIO AND PERHAPS TERRORIST ATTACKS, IT MIGHT HAVE SOME SUCCESS. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON EXTENT AND NATURE OF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE KURDS RECEIVE. KURDISH HOPES OF BRINGING ABOUT REGIME MORE FAVORABLE TO THEM SEEM UNREALISTIC AT THIS TIME. MAIN OPPOSITION TO CURRENT GOI POLICY OF RESTRAINT REPORTEDLY COME FROM THOSE WHO WANT TO UNLEASH THE MILITARY. END SUMMARY.

2. ON APRIL 25 RCC VICE CHAIRMAN SADDAM HUSSEIN SPOKE TO ENLARGED MEETING OF NATIONAL FRONT AND STRESSED THAT IMPLEMENTATION OF KURDISH AUTONOMY LAW IS PROCEEDING RAPIDLY. HE SAID MEMBERS OF REGIONAL LEGISLATURE AND EXECUTIVE WOULD SOON BE ANNOUNCED. HE CALLED ON NATIONAL FRONT OFFICIALS TO MAKE CLEAR TO ALL KURDS THAT REGIME WILL ELIMINATE BARZANI AND "THAT BARZANI SHOULD PRAISE WHITE FLAG BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE". IT IS "IRREVOCABLY OUT OF QUESTION" TO AGAIN NEGOTIATE WITH HIM. SADDAM DECLARED THAT ECONOMIC BLOCKADE WOULD BE CARRIED OUT AGAINST BARZANI CONTROLLED TERRITORY.

3. ON SAME DAY RCC DECIDED TO EXTEND BY 30 DAYS AMESTY PERIOD DURING WHICH KURDISH OFFICIALS AND SOLDIERS WHO HAD JOINED BARZANI COULD RETURN WITHOUT PUNISHMENT. GOI ALSO ANNOUNCED ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BUILDINGS IN ARBIL. IN ADDITION, ACTIVITIES OF NEW KURDISH VICE PRESIDENT AND FIVE MINISTERS ARE BEING GIVEN PROMINENT MEDIA COVERAGE, USUALLY STRESSING GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PLANS FOR KURDISTAN. CONGRESS OF RUMP KDP IS BEING PREPARED AFTER WHICH IT WILL PROBABLY JOIN NATIONAL FRONT.

4. UNMENTIONED BY THE MEDIA ARE THE REPORTED CLASHES BETWEEN PESH MERGA AND IRAQI ARMY REINFORCED BY PARAMILITARY COMMUNIST KURDS (CALLED "JACKASSES" BY VOICE OF KURDISTAN). INFORMATION AVAILABLE IN BAGHDAD AS OF MAY 1 INDICATED THAT AFTER DIFFICULT MARCH GARRISON AT ZAKHO
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PAGE 03 BAGHDA 00280 061016Z

WAS RELIEVED (REFTEL) AND THAT IRAQI AF BEING INCREASINGLY USED TO ATTACK VILLAGES IN AREA OF MAXIMUM DIFFICULTY, APPARENTLY SULAIMANIYA-KHANAQIN-KIRKUK TRIANGLE.

5. PRESIDENT BAKR HAS SAID VIRTUALLY NOTHING ON KURDISH PROBLEM AND INDIAN EMBOFF NAIRAM INTERPRETS THIS AS SIGN OF POLICY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BAKR AND SADDAM HUSSEIN, WHO IS PRINCIPAL ARCHITECT OF CURRENT POLICY. ALGERIAN

AMBASSADOR SAADI CONFIRMS THAT BAKR FAVORS TOUGHER MILITARY POLICY THAN SADDAM BUT DISCOUNTED RIFT. HE SAID POLICY IS ALREADY HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY BAKR AND ONLY REASON BAKR HAS NOT SPOKEN OUT MORE IS HIS POOR HEALTH, ALGERIAN AMB SAID EXECUTION OF 11 KURDS ON APRIL 14 IN ARBIL WHICH LED TO KURDISH EXECUTION OF 19 IRAQI MILITARY ON APRIL 21 WAS EXAMPLE OF DIFFERING MILITARY AND CIVILIAN APPROACH. SADDAM HAD TRIED TO STOP EXECUTIONS, BUT BY THAT TIME AUTHORITIES IN ARBIL HAD ALREADY EXECUTED THEM. ACCORDING TO EGYPTIAN COUNSELOR BARAKA, KURDS HAD BEEN CAUGHT TRYING TO PLACE BOMBS IN PUBLIC PLACES IN BAGHDAD AND ARBIL. HE SAID 19 EXECUTED ARAB SOLDIERS 92 OFFICERS) HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY KURDS PRIOR TO MARCH 11 WHILE ON PLEASURE BUS TRIP. THEIR EXECUTION WAS PARTICULARLY RESENTED BY ARMY AND IS PART OF EXPLANATION FOR COMMENCEMENT OF LARGE SCALE BOMBING OF VILLAGES AFTER APRIL 22.

6. COMMENT: EVENTS CITED LAST PARA, IF TRUE, ARE GOOD EXAMPLE OF TYPE OF ESCALATION THAT COULD LEAD TO EARLY FULL SCALE OFFENSIVE DESPITE OBVIOUS RELUCTANCE OF GOI TO COMMIT ITSELF TO PURELY MILITARY SOLUTION. IF SADDAM HUSSEIN CAN MAINTAIN CONTROL OF MILITARY, HE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PREFER TO GIVE POLICY OF ECONOMIC BLOCKADE, MILITARY PRESSURE AND PROMISES OF PROSPERITY FOR ANI-BARZANI KURDS FEW MORE MONTHS TO PRODUCE RESULTS. GIVEN RECENT KURDISH ATTACK AGAINST KIRKUK OIL INSTALLATIONS AND BOMBINGS IN BAGHDAD, SADDAM MAY BE FORCED TO SEEK MILITARY SOLUTION. ONLY BRIGHT SPOT IN THIS GLOOMY PICTURE IS FACT THAT SADDAM HSSEIN IN HIS SPEECH OF APRIL 25 DID NOT REPEAT HIS ACCUSATION OF U.S. ASSISTANCE TO BARZANI.
LOWRIE

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